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AN OLD TIME COURTSHIP



A COMEDY IN
THREE ACTS

Written by
GRACE G. WATKINS
KRESS, VIRGINIA

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A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

CHARACTERS.

Mrs. Hawthorne.....an impecunious widow.
Belle Hawthorne.....her daughter.
Nancy.....the maid or cook.
Joe.....the House boy.
Mr. John Graham.....a rich widower.
Harry Brown.....a young dentist (doctor)

COSTUMES.

Mrs. H. Matron's dress of 1860—black
Belle, fashionable dress of some time.
Nancy, servant's dress
Joe, same though neat
Mr. Graham, elaborately dressed
Harry, plain, neat suit of 1860
Time of playing—One hour and fifteen minutes

ACT I.

SCENE. Mrs. Hawthorne's sitting room. Mrs. H. seated at writing desk with writing materials, letters and cards scattered about. Furniture once good, but shows the use of many years. Room scrupulously clean.

Mrs. H.—(Folding and sealing letter). There, that much is done. I do hope Belle will be sensible, and do as I so much wish. (writes). "Mrs. John Graham, of Graham House," How nice that looks! If that young Brown does come, I'll settle him.

Enter Belle.

Belle—Well, Mamma, have you finished your letters? I hope you did not forget Mr. Brown?

Mrs. H.—(Sternly). No, Belle, I could not overlook him, as he and Mr. Graham are such close friends, that I am obliged to invite him, if I do Mr. Graham. But my dear; Mr. Brown is not one I should like my daughter to marry. I wish you to be very agreeable to Mr. Graham, for you know we are not as we were when your dear father was with us. Belle, (very impressively) Mr. Graham is wealthy!

Belle—(aside) Yes, and as ugly as a mud fence. (aloud) Yes, Mamma.

Mrs. H.—And Belle, you must remember your poor mother could not endure poverty!

Belle.—Well, Mamma, don't lets talk any more about that now. Here comes Nancy with your tea, I've had mine, so tra-la. (exit) I am going.

Enter Nancy With Tray.

Nancy—(bowing and placing tray on small table near Mrs. H.) I hope you feels better dis monin' Mistis.

Mrs. H.—(seating herself at table) Yes, Nancy, I feel very much better. Where is Joe?

Nancy—Lor' Mistis, I can't keep up wid dat nigger; I reckon he's in de kitchen now as it's 'bout eatin' time.

Mrs. H.—Well, Nancy; give me that shawl over there, and go and tell Joe to come here as soon as he eats his breakfast.

Nancy—Ya'sm. (exit.)

Mrs. H.—Now I must try to make Mr. Graham's visit as pleasant as I can. He can't help admiring Belle, she is so fresh and young; so different from girls in general.

Enter Joe.

J.—(Bowing). Top of de morning, Mistis, (fretfully) Mistis, Nancy do fret de life out ob me. She jes' kep arter me 'til I had to leave before I eat half enough; de breakfast was awful good. Dat's one thing Nancy kin do, she kin cook!

Mrs. H.—Well, Joe; Nancy only wants you to attend to your business, and not stop in the kitchen too long.

Joe—(aside). Stay in de kitchen too long! gosh! I'd like to stay in dar all de time, if Nancy was in dar too. (Aloud) Ya'sm, Mistis.

Mrs. H.—Now, Joe; take these leters to the Post Office first thing this morning, and come back by the store and bring these things on this memorandum.

J.—(Hesitates). On dis memm-er-an-der? Ya'sm, but how is I gwine to know what to ask for?

Mrs. H.—You just give this paper to Mr. Smith and he will give you the right things.

J.—Ya'sm. Must I ride Snowflake or Dexter?

Mrs. H.—Better take Dexter, he has not been used much lately, and don't you go off to see any of those girls at Mr. Hampton's quarters, but come right back, for I want you.

J.—All right, Mistis. (Aside) Dem is mighty sweet gals over dar, but I reckon if I wants Nancy, I better do like Mistis say, kase Nancy is mighty notionable.

(Exit.)

Mrs. H.—(Finishes breakfast, rings for Nancy). I wish Harry Brown was at the South Pole, or anywhere else but in this country. I don't see why Mr. Graham allows him to go with him everywhere; I'm sure.

Enter Nancy, exit Mrs. H. after giving Nancy some instructions about dinner.)

Nancy—My! Mistis is *heap* better! Well, dat nice Mr. Brown won't stand no chance here, if Mistis kin git everything her way. Mis' Belle ain't studin' 'bout dat ole rich man, I kno, Mistis better git him herself, if she kin! Den, I specks 'twould be all right 'bout Marse Harry; but lor' if I don't 'baive myself, I'll be gittin' a blessin' I'm feard.

(Enter Joe, Hurriedly).

Joe—Nancy, whar's my whip? (Looks around). I'se in a mighty big hurry, kase Mistis wants me to go to the Pos-offis right away; whar is it?

Nancy—You is de bigges' fool I eber see'd, Joe Jones. Dar's your whip stickin' in your coat pockit!

Joe—Go long, Nancy, don't you see huc-cum I come froo here? Well, I jes' had to git one more glance at dem purty eyes ob you's (goes near her and tries to look in her face.)

Nancy—Go on way f'om here, Joe Jones, and 'tend to yore busi-ness. I ain't studin' 'bout you.

Joe—(going out). Well, I'se comin' back jes' as quick as I kin. (Exit.)

Nancy—(Musing). If dat ai'nt de pertest nigger in dis world! My! but he is mighty harn'-some! He needn't come foolin' me, jes' the same.

Enter Belle.

B.—Nancy you are very slow with your work this morning. You should have been back to the kitchen before now. Have you seen Joe?

N.—(Confused). He—I—Mistis sent him to de pos-offis, I believ.

B.—Well, that's all right (aside) I reckon Mamma sent those letters, and one was for Mr. Graham. Well, he is not as handsome as Harry, and I don't like him anyway. (To Nancy) Where is Mamma?

N.—She done gone for her drive Mis Belle.

B.—Well, you can go now, and don't you let *any* body through the front door this morning, just say, "not at home."

N.—Ya'sm, Mis Belle. (Exit.)

B.—I hope Mamma will take a nice *long* drive this morning, I know it will do her lots of good. (Looks out of the window) I wonder who that is? Well, Nancy will attend to him?

Enter Nancy Hurriedly.

N.—Mis' Belle, dar's a man comin' in froo de window! I wouldn't let him in de door, but I reckon maybe you wouldn't object to him comin' in de window. (Exit Nancy.)

Enter Harry Brown Through the Window.

B.—Why Harry, aren't you early? I did not suppose you had your breakfast yet!.

H.—Coming in, placing chair for her, which she accepts and then seats himself. Oh, I've been up a long time, and as I saw your mother's carriage near the village, just thought I would drop in and have a little chat before she gets back.

B.—Do you know, Mamma is going to give a little reception and she has actually invited Mr. Harry Brown! What do you think of that?

H.—Well, that young man will certainly avail himself of the opportunity. But really Belle, what made her do it, do you suppose?

B.—Oh, you see she wants that rich Mr. Graham to come also, and she couldn't have him without you, see?

H.—Oh, well; so much the better. I'll get him to entertain your mother, and she will be so occupied with him, that she won't notice us.

B.—I am not so sure about that, Harry, she wants *me* to engross Mr. Graham's attention you know.

H.—(Aside). Well, I'll see that she doesn't, or my name is not Harry Brown. (To her) Oh, never mind that now, Belle, we are wasting our valuable time. When will you consent for me to ask your mother for your hand?

B.—Oh, Harry don't say anything to her about it yet, for I feel sure she will never give her consent, and ———.

H.—(Breaking in). But, Belle; you know I shall have to leave next month for my new field. There's no chance for a young doctor here.

B.—Why, Harry; you are not a doctor you are a dentist!

H.—It's all the same. I can't stay here, and Belle, when I leave, I must take you with me.

B.—You know, Harry, that I would go anywhere with you, only please don't say anything to Mamma yet. You know how vexed she will be with me, and you too, and I just could not bear all that!

H.—Well, I'll tell you what we can do. We'll keep quiet till after the reception, and when we tell her, and if she refuses to listen, why there is only one thing for us to do.

B.—Well—I—reckon that will be all we can do. (Looks out of window) I see Mama's carriage. My! how the time has flown.

H.—(Rising). Good bye, Belle, (they shake hands) till Thursday night.

B.—Good bye, Harry, hurry!

(Exit Harry.)

Enter Nancy Quickly.

N.—Miss Belle, I see Mistis comin' whar is Marse Harry?

B.—Oh, do hush, Nancy, and go help Mamma off with her things, I am busy with my book, do you hear?

N.—Ya'sm Mis Belle, I hear. (Aside) Dats a mihty oncommon interestin' book. Wonder huccum I ain't see'd dat book before? Well, I reckon 'twas on de table all de time. (Exit).

End of Act I.—Curtain.

ACT II.

SCENE—Mrs. H.'s parlor. Nancy and Joe busy arranging chairs, etc.

N.—Git away from here, Joe; you don't know how to fix nothing; now jes' look at dat cheer, whoever see'd such a way to fix things? Ain't you never gwine to learn?

J.—Now, Nancy, you stop fussin' at me. How kin I learn to set cheers in a room when I ain't even lookin' at em?

N.—What in de Jeemeses River is you lookin' at den?

J.—You jes' look at me, and you will perskiver de objec' of my visium perfected in my opticks.

N.—(Aside). My, ain't he smart! (Aloud) Yas; Joe, I see. Now you jes' set right down in dis cheer right here, and keep a lookin' till I gits dis room fit to perceive company in. (puts everything in order while Joe looks on). Mis' Belle, gwine to look awful fine to-night, and I bet 'twill be "blackjack 'against thunder" twixt dem young men, which one we be a head. (While she is talking, Joe is wriggling and half falling off the chair, and begins to sing just as she stops).

Joe—(Singing). "Oh! me, I don't know what to do; "der's gwine to be a hot time in the ole town tonight."

N.—Look here, Joe Jones, is you been drinkin' agin? I'll bet you come by Marse Hampton's de oder day, and got dem gals to give you some cider or something. Ain't you heard Mistis say dat "strong wine is raging and drink is a mocker, and him dat gits kotch dat way is a fool?

J.—(Standing up). No, Nancy, I ain't been drinking; I'se done signed de pledge, and if I hadn't, I couldn't drink in no peace, wid you and mistis all time arter me about it.

N.—Well, Joe, dats right. I always did say mistis was right not to have any likker in her house on de side-bode. De good book says "tich not, handle not, tas' not," en I says smell not, too. I reckon Moses forgot dat.

J.—Come on Nance, we orter done gone back to de kitchen befor now. (Aside) Nancy would make a fust class housekeeper, don't you think so? (To audience). (Exit N. and J.)

Enter Mrs. H.

Mrs. H.—Now everything is ready. I hope they will all come, and that Belle will look her best tonight. I think Mr. Graham is a little particular, but as Belle is so young, he will overlook anything amiss in her. (Seats herself after re-arranging a few articles). I do hope too, that they will be on time, for I don't like to be kept waiting. (Ring heard). Ah, there's someone now!

Enter Nancy Followed by Mr. John Graham.

N.—(Staccato). Marse Graham, Mistis. (*Exit*).

Mrs. H.—Oh, Mr. Graham, I am delighted to see you. So glad you did not disappoint me.

Mr. G.—Thank you, Mrs. Hawthorne, I am charmed to be here. My friend, Mr. Field, wished me to hand you this card with his regrets. (Hands her a card). He had an important business matter to attend to, and could not possibly come.

Mrs. H.—Oh, I'm real sorry. But pray excuse me, take a seat. (Seats herself).

Mr. G.—Thanks. (Seats himself). I hope you are well. I have wanted to come over before now, but business has detained me. It has been quite an age, to me, since I had the extreme pleasure of being with you, but my enjoyment will be enhanced by the lapse of time.

Mrs. H.—I am sure I am very pleased to have you, and Belle will be down in a few minutes.

Mr. G.—My dear Mrs. Hawthorne, if I should be so fortunate as to find favor in your estimation, might I hope to ———

Mrs. H.———I——yes——Mr. Graham, will you please excuse me? and I will see what keeps Belle. (Ring heard). Oh, there's Mr. Brown, I suppose.

Enters Nancy and Brown.

N.—Mistis, here's Marse Harry!

(*Exit*).

Mr. Brown—(Entering). Good evening, Mrs. Hawthorne, how are you? Pleased to see you looking so well. How do you do, Mr. John? (They shake hands). (He hands her a card, and gives an excuse for his friend).

Mrs. H.—Thank you, how are you? Pray be seated and please excuse me a moment. (*Exit*).

Mr. G.—Hello! Harry, the wind has turned in your direction, hasn't it? Mrs. H. seems a little more gracious to you I notice.

H.—Oh! no, I am afraid I am not as lucky as that; I think she would like *you* to be in my place.

Mr. G.—Me? Oh, pshaw, you must be mistaken about that (enter Belle followed by Mrs. H.) Greetings around, all seat themselves, (Mrs. H. near Harry, Belle near Graham).

Mrs. H.—Belle, show Mr. G. your latest paintings; (to Mr. G.). She is quite accomplished in that line, Mr. Graham, and I am sure you will like her pictures (to Harry) Mr. Brown, when do you expect to leave us? I hear that you are going out west?

H.—Really, I don't know when I shall leave, but I have decided that I shall do better in the west, and as soon as I can settle a few matters of importance to me, I shall start.

Mrs. H.—We shall indeed, be sorry to lose you—(Enter Nancy in a Hurry).

N.—'Scuse me, Mistis, (bows) dar's a man out here wants to speak to you, please marm.

(*Exit Mrs. H. and Nancy.*)

H.—My stars! The old lady was just about to say something awful sweet, for her. (Aloud) May I sit here? (Advances near the others).

B.—Certainly, Mr. Brown, we have no objection. Mr. Graham

has just been telling me of his travels out west, and you should have heard him, as you are so soon to go there.

Mr. G.—Harry! I did not know this, why haven't you told me?

H.—Well, Mr. John, I didn't like to tell you till I had to.

Mr. G.—All right, we will talk this over later. Miss Belle, your mother is a remarkably young looking woman, for her years. I remember when I was young, how much I admired her then, though she was scarcely grown, and it seems but yesterday I saw her in her bridal array. Oh, time, you speed away too fast on your wings of flight!

B.—Yes, Mr. Graham, Mamma is young, young in heart and soul, and she is the best Mamma in the world.

Enter Mrs. H.

Mrs. H.—(The men rise). Pray be seated. Mr. Brown will you close that door? My neuralgia is quite sensitive to a draught. We were discussing (glances toward Mr. G. and B.) your leaving. I was saying how sorry we shall be to lose you. But young men can do so much better away from home these days. You remember, "a prophet," etc.?

H.—Thank you, Mrs. Hawthorne, that is exactly my idea. I hope to succeed in my new field, and shall remember you here with great pleasure.

Mrs. H.—I am sure I wish you success and prosperity (Another glance at the others) in your undertaking.

(At this place they all sing several selections, for the entertainment of each other, and Nancy passes around tea and cakes, after which the men rise to say good evening).

Mr. G.—Mrs. Hawthorne, we have spent a most enjoyable evening. When shall I see you again?

Mrs. H.—I shall be delighted to have you call anytime. Belle and I are great "stay-at-home" folks, and will be "at home" whenever you call.

Mr. G.—Thanks. (Belle and Harry are talking in an undertone during this dialogue). I will be pleased to call Saturday morning at eleven o'clock?

Mrs. H.—Certainly, I shall expect you. (They all rise and the men prepare to depart).

H.—(Aside to Belle) Look for me at 10 o'clock Saturday morning, you hear? (To the others) This will be my last chance to see you Mrs. Hawthorne, so I must say good-bye.

Mrs. H.—(Sweetly) Good-bye, Mr. Brown, I wish you joy and happiness in the far west!

Mr. G. and H.—Good evening ladies. (Both bow and exit together).

Mrs. H.—Belle, how did Mr. Graham like you?

Belle—(Laughing) Oh! Mamma how do you think I know? He surely did not say one way or the other. He talked mostly about you.

Mrs. H.—About me? Oh, well, he thought that would please you. (aside) Anyway, that young Brown is out of the way. I think I can manage the rest. (to Belle) It is late, Belle, so we must retire. Good night, dear daughter. (Kisses her)

B.—Good night, Mamma.

(Exit Belle, then Mrs. H.)

End of Act 2nd—Curtain.

ACT III.

SCENE—Mrs. H's parlor. Saturday morning.

Mrs. Hawthorne preparing to take her morning drive. Rings for Nancy.

Enter Nancy.

Mrs. H.—What in the world makes you so slow? Here I've been waiting nearly fifteen minutes for you. Now listen, Nancy, I am going out, but will be back at a quarter to eleven and I want to find every thing in order, for I expect Mr. Graham at eleven. You and Joe must hurry and clean up this room.

N.—All right, Mistis, I'se gwine to.

Enter Joe.

Mrs. H.—Joe, help Nancy with whatever she has to do, and both of you hurry.

(Exit)

J.—What's the matter, Nancy? Pears like Mistis is might flusticated 'bout somethin'!

N.—I'll just tell you, and den you'll know, if you'll listen. Marse Graham is comin' here dis morning; and Mistis wants everything to look awful nice, kase I recon she thinks he gwine to ask her for Mis' Belle.

J.—Well, she needn't ter fool herself 'bout dat, kase, if I ain't on-common mistaken Marse Graham aint studin' 'bout Miss Belle. He's got sumthin pertiklar to talk to Mistis 'bout, my 'pinion.

N.—Here, Joe set dis cheer over dar. When is you see'd Lize Jenkins? (turns toward him.)

J.—(Grinning) Shuh, Nancy, I ai'n't thinkin' 'bout Lize, you am de gal for me! (stands up and speaks dramatically.) You am de star of me night, de sunshine ob my daytime! Nancy ai'n't you never gwine to say "yes," and put me out of dis suspensary? I'se been lovin' you a mighty long time, 'pears to me.

N.—Dars time enough for me and you Joe, arter de white folks gits straight wid their affairs. (looks at him scornfully.) Is you ever heard me say I'se gwine to marry you? I disremember ever saying anything like dat.

J.—But Nancy, if you ai'n't said so you done make me think so, and you can't git out of dat.

N.—I aint said I wanted to git out of it, is I? Look here, can't you do no better'n dat? Mistis gwine to discharge you if you don't look out, an' den you won't never see Nancy no more!

J.—(walking about.) She won't know nothin' 'tall 'bout it, if you keep your mouth shet, kase who gwine tell her, 'cep 'tis you?

N.—Yas, and I will tell her, if you can't 'haive yerself. And I reckon you had better go on to see Lize Jenkins, if dats de best you can talk to me.

Joe—(coming towards her.) Shuh, Nance, I'se jes' fooling, I don't love nobody but you, and I ain't gwine never talk dat way ergin.

Nance.—All right den, jes see dat you sticks to it. 'En if you is real nice an' good, mebbe I'll tell you before long, what I'll do. (looks up.) My gracious land, Joe, hurry up, kase Mistis will think we'se jes been fooling de time erway. Here, straighten dat rug, and hurry up.

J.—(aside) I don't call dis fooling time erway, do you (to audience? (to N.) All right, Nancy, is you see'd Mis' Belle, dis morning?

N.—Of kase, I is! She gits up long 'fore Mistis, or you either, and goes out in the garden—listen! can't you hear her singing? (Belle heard singing, and then enters.)

Belle—There, that will do Nancy, you and Joe have done real well. (looks at her watch.) It's nearly 10 o'clock, you can go to the kitchen now, and I will stay here till Mamma comes. (exit Nancy and Joe with bows.)

B.—(takes up book) Harry will be here soon (arranges flowers she has brought in from garden.) This is for him and these for Mamma and these are mine. I wonder if Mr. Graham likes flowers? I reckon he is too matter of fact to think about them or——

Enter Harry.

H.—Good morning Belle, I'm on time, you see. Where is your mother?

B.—Oh, she is out as usual this time of the day. But she will be back at a quarter to eleven and you must not stay long——

H.—But I am going to stay 'till she comes, for I must see her to-day, can't wait any longer, as I shall leave first of next week.

B.—Oh, Harry, so soon! What shall I do when you are gone? (sobs)

H.—You forget, Belle, that I am to take you with me.

B.—But how can I go? Mamma will never consent, and if you leave me, she will make me marry that horrid Mr. Graham!

H.—Listen, Belle, I say I am going to take you, not leave you; you just leave everything to me, I'll tell her all about it, and ask her consent, and if she refuses, you must meet me Monday night at the old oak tree, and we will leave for our home in the far west!

B.—I—don't—like to do anything like that, Harry, but if there's no other way, I will. Maybe Mamma will see how it is if you tell her. She never lets me tell her anything. If I try she stops me and says something about Mr. Graham.

H.—I'll tell you a secret, Bell. Mr. Graham is coming here this morning, not to ask for you as your mother thinks, but to propose to her! Now don't you think she will consent to our wishes?

B.—Oh, Harry, do you really think that? Oh, how nice that would be. Mr. Graham is real nice, don't you think so? Oh! oh! oh! that will be too jolly for anything.

H.—But wait a moment. Your mother may not accept him, then what?

B.—(more quietly.) I think she will though, else how could she be willing for him to have me? She must esteem him very highly.

H.—Yes, I think she does, and will accept him, if so, you see we are all right. Mr. Graham is my best friend, and I don't think he

would raise my hopes falsely. He told me yesterday that he fully expects to be accepted, and that Mrs. Hawthorne would then consent to our union.

B.—I am so glad he did not want me!

H.—I am too. But look here, aren't you going to give me a flower?

B.—Why yes, I forgot all about them, (pins flower on his coat.) There, how do you like that one?

H.—Very much, (kisses flower) I shall keep this forever. Now, lets see, its most time for your mother to be here, twenty to eleven. Seems to me time flies awful fast when I am here!

B.—Yes it does. Oh, what will Mamma say!

H.—Never mind, whatever she says, Mr. Graham will surely change her tune. We have only to bide our time, and all will come out right.

Enter Nancy.

N.—(bowing) Mis' Belle, Mistis done cum, and say whar is you?

B.—Tell her I am in the parlor and Mr. Brown is here and wants to see her. (exit Nancy with an exclamation of surprise.)

H.—(aside) Now for it! (aloud) Courage, Bell. I am sure all will be well.

Enter Mrs. H.

Mrs. H.—(taking off hat and shawl) Good morning Mr. Brown, may I inquire what brings you here?

H.—Certainly, Mrs. H., and I shall be pleased to tell you. I am here to ask your consent for my marriage with your daughter, whom I love very deeply, and who has returned that love and joins me in asking for that consent!

Mrs. H.—How dare you sir! You have both deceived me! Oh, my daughter, how could you! You have blasted my hopes, ruined my life! Oh, to think of it, and you Sir, to encourage her to disobey her mother! You took advantage of my clemency to steal my daughter's affections, and make her deceive her mother, oh! this is too much. (sobs violently.)

H.—My dear lady, you wrong me. I have never deceived you. I have loved your daughter ever since we were children, and I think you have always known it. You have never forbade me to come here, and if she loves me, I don't think I won that love underhandedly. Ask her

Mrs. H.—Belle, is this true?

B.—Yes, Mamma, but don't be too hard on Harry. He is not to blame and Mamma, I never could marry Mr. Graham.

Mrs. H.—You will do as your mother says, do you hear? I have never been disobeyed before, and I never will be again. As for you, Sir, (turning to H.) I will never give you my consent. You may as well understand that. Now as I expect another visitor, I will ask you to leave us alone.

H.—Mrs. H., that "other visitor" is my best friend, and I will stay 'till he comes, and whatever he says, I will abide by. (seats himself)

Enter Nancy followed by Mr. Graham.

*N.—*Marse Graham, Mistis. (seats herself in a corner unobserved)

Mrs. H.—(controlling herself) Good morning, Mr. Graham, I am pleased to see you.

Mr. G.—(bowing to all) Good morning, a family gathering. (smiles on all) How are you, my dear Mrs. H.? May I speak to you a moment?

Mrs. H.—(goes one side near front of stage, he follows) Certainly, Mr. G., here we can talk and not be disturbed.

Mr. G.—(both seat themselves) You are aware, I suppose, that I have been unusually attracted here of late, and that——

Mrs. H.—(interrupting) Yes, Mr. Graham, and I have seen that you admire Belle very much. If you desire my consent to your marriage with her, I give it before it is asked.

*Mr. G.—*You misunderstand me, my dear lady, it is not Belle whom I love; It is your own dear self, (takes her hand) May I hope to win this fair hand?

Mrs. H.—(drawing away) I hardly understand you, Mr. Graham. This is such a surprise to me, I thought——

*Mr. G.—*Yes, I know you have thought I cared for Belle, but she loves Harry, and never could have loved me. But I have loved you ever since we were young, and though you married and went away, and stayed for years, I have never forgotten you or ceased to care for you. Will you, after all my years of waiting, be my bride? (looks at her intently.)

*Mrs. H.—*Mr. Graham, I have never dreamed of this, but if you care so much, I will, (places her hand in his, and they turn to Belle and Harry) Mr. Brown, I have said I never would give my consent, but you can now ask Mr. Graham, as Belle's future guardian and father, who will decide for us all.

*H.—*Mr. John, have I your consent to marry your daughter? (leads Belle forward)

*Mr. G.—*Certainly, Harry, take her and be happy. (Joe has entered unseen before this, and he and Nancy have been talking in the back ground, and waiting for this chance to speak. They now advance and Joe leads Nancy in front of Mr. G.)

*J.—*Marse John, is you de spokesman ob dis meetin'?

*Mr. G.—*Well, I reckon so, Joe. What do you want? (smiles)

*J.—*Me and Nancy here, wants to git spliced, and we axes you and Mistis to give us yore persent, and we will both work for you as long es we do live!

*Mr. G.—*So, Nancy, you and Joe are but following our example, are you? Well, go on and be happy. I am so happy myself, that I could not deny anything asked of me now.

*J.—*Well, Marse John, may I ride yore fine horse sometimes, and when me and Nancy goes to de parson's house, kin we have dat fine new buggy ob yore's?

*Mr. G.—*Yes, Joe, if you will be good and work hard this year for us all.

*J.—*Thank you kindly, Marse John. But Miss Belle and Marse Harry is gwine erway, what we gwine to do den? (whims)

B.—Oh, we will come back again some day, Joe, and then such a fine time as we will have all together!

J.—Well, Miss Belle, I hopes you will come to see us, and dat it won't be so orful long fust. Mistis, can me and Nancy sing you all a little song for de 'casium? (looks around) Nancy, whar is de banjo?

N.—(producing it from behind a chair or table) Here' tis, Joe, Now what is we gwine to sing?

J.—(takes Nancy by the hand, leads her to the front and they seat themselves in the center, while Mrs. H. and Mr. G. stand on one side and Harry and Belle on the other. Then J. and N. sing something suitable, after which they rise.)

J.—Good night, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for yore kind retention.

End of Act III.

CURTAIN



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